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Assessment Metrics?

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: In the wake of countless land protests throughout Guangdong Province, the Guangdong Communist Party School wants to eliminate the corruption and management failures of its cadres and civil servants. Besides increased anti-corruption training, assessments of leaders are increasingly based on "putting people first" and foreign media reaction. A recent visit to the Guangdong Party School, however, revealed the efficacy of such training to be suspect. End summary.

Background on Guangdong Party School Structure

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¶2. (SBU) Poloff recently met with Chen Hongyu, Vice President of both the Guangdong Communist Party School and the Guangdong Administration College. Both schools are responsible for training the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders and top civil servants in Guangdong Province. Last year the Guangdong Administration College trained 13,000 civil servants alone. Guangdong Province is unique in that the Guangdong Communist Party School and Guangdong Administration College use the same faculty and are housed in the same building. The discussion with Chen focused on issues of corruption, leadership assessment and youth party membership development. This recent visit built upon the Consulate's prior 2004 visit to the Guangzhou Municipal Party School, which revealed the Guangzhou Party school's emphasis on practical management instead of party ideology (see reftel, "Less Marx More Management").

¶3. (U) The Guangdong Party School/Administration College has 500 faculty members. According to Chen, the school is relatively independent of the Central Party School and National Administration College in Beijing. In general Beijing gives "guiding principles" for the Guangdong school, but the province creates its own curriculum and methods. The student body includes people like city mayors, director generals of provincial bureaus, chiefs of provincial departments, and heads of counties and prefectural districts. Of the 13,000 civil servants trained last year, many were above the Section Chief level. However, of that number, 7,000 were trained for only one week as part of the new 2006 Civil Servant Law. The law states that all civil servants must receive some kind of basic training before starting their job. The law also requires officials above section chief level should have at least three-months of

training every five years.

Curriculum and Research Projects: China's Newest B-School

¶5. (U) In search of the latest case studies and pedagogical methods, some faculty members have visited and observed the top public administration programs in the United States and Europe. As a result, the curriculum seems much closer to a MBA program than the ideological indoctrination camps of the past. (Note: In fact, the South China Morning Post recently reported that the Central Party School has opened its doors to business professionals to attend courses for a hefty fee. End Note). Currently the curriculum includes three categories of classes. The first category, which typically lasts two months, is mostly for the new civil servants who require training under the 2006 Civil Servant Law. Category two, which lasts four months, is for officials ready to be promoted. Chen said that in 2005, about 300 officials had this type of training in the Guangdong Party School. Category three are subject-specific (such as training on WTO rules) usually only for one to two weeks.

¶6. (U) Additionally, the school is occasionally tasked by Beijing or Guangdong Provincial authorities to research special projects. Recent topics have included:

- Water resource management
- Technological innovation
- Government supervisory role
- Compulsory education in rural areas.
- The Guangzhou East Train Station Management
- Migrant worker problem
- Coordination of Guangdong and Hong Kong integration
- Urban planning problems for peri-urban areas

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Education not Punishment: Anti-Corruption Training

¶7. (U) Vice President Chen was very willing to discuss anti-corruption training programs. Such training focuses on "professional morals of civil servants" and keeping civil servants "clean". Chen believes education, not punishment, is the most important method to prevent corruption. In addition to the regular training (included in category one and two courses), a special course is taught every July for the highest ranking Guangdong officials on "self-discipline". The students in the course include director generals of the provincial government, presidents of universities and mayors of prefectures. Guest lectures typically include high-ranking Beijing officials as well as appearances by Zhang Dejiang (Guangdong Party Chief) and Huang Huahua (Guangdong Governor).

...But is it a Deterrent?

¶8. (SBU) All of the anti-corruption courses use videos and vivid case studies to try to "awaken self-discipline" among civil servants. The videos and cases are followed by group discussions, which Chen said are often very heated and have a profound effect on students. The program is coordinated with the Guangdong Supervision Department and the Provincial Procurator. One of the most powerful examples Chen likes to use is about a former Director General of the Guangdong Civil Affairs Department, who, after a 20-year government career, went to jail for 10 years for corruption. Many students have heard of the official, so the story has a profound effect on them. (Note: Chen said the former Director General came to the party school three times for anti-corruption training before her arrest.) Additionally, students are asked to calculate the time they would spend in jail for the meager benefit of a 10,000 RMB bribe (USD \$1,250).

Assessment of Leaders and Protests

¶9. (U) Borrowing from Hu Jintao's idea of "scientific development", Chen stated the school wants to create a scientific cadre assessment system. In essence, GDP growth is no longer the only measurement of effective leadership. Instead, the school hopes to create leaders who are both "capable" and "moral" and who "place people first". Currently the main criteria are: 1) political reliability; 2) capability; 3) attitude & working style (i.e. no corruption); 4) the people's "trust"; and 5) the number of unflattering foreign media reports.

¶10. (U) Regarding the effect of Guangdong's numerous land and labor protests on leadership assessment, Chen called the topic very "timely", however it is officially not a Party School research priority. Instead, protests are researched by the corresponding responsible bureaus. Therefore, the Labor Department researches labor protests, the Land and Resources Bureau is responsible for land protests, and the Petition Bureau covers petition protests.

The Next Generation of Communists?

¶11. (U) Chen believed it is important to reach out to young people. QHu Jintao's recent statement of the "eight glories and eight shames" (barong, bachi), Chen said, has made a strong impression on young people. However, the school mostly focuses on civil servants and only has occasional lectures at universities in Guangdong.

¶12. (U) In general, Chen did not consider youth recruitment into the Communist Party to be difficult because the Chinese people are by nature a very philosophical and political people. Moreover, the rumor that college students simply join the party in order to get a better job is not true. He argued that most jobs in the Chinese economy are in the private sector where party affiliation has less significance.

A New Central Party Edict

¶13. (SBU) The April edition of Outlook magazine (published by Xinhua) reported a notice sent by top Party officials calling for changes in provincial leadership. The notice included personnel changes such as cutting provincial vice-party secretaries and spelling out the key criteria for

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future political leaders. Beyond just economic indicators, special emphasis would be placed on the candidates' record in public administration, combating corruption, promoting consensus and personal qualities such as honesty and modesty.

Comment

¶14. (SBU) As the Outlook magazine article stressed, the Guangdong Party School is similarly putting emphasis on competent, responsible decision-makers, not just ideological robots. Leaders in Guangdong Province face a particular challenge because their mistakes and inadequacies can be quickly detected by Hong Kong media. Recently the All China Federation of Trade Unions announced that Guangdong had the highest number of labor unrest incidents of any province with 60,000. Therefore, Party School pedagogues want to emphasize Hu Jintao's maxims of ensuring social harmony and "putting the people first". However, as evidenced by the Director General with 20 years of service and three visits to anti-corruption training, even the best training cannot solve all problems.

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